

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources



DNR

Alvin A. Taylor
Director

Robert Boyles
Deputy Director for
Marine Resources

20 August 2015

Ms. Amy Hapeman
Permits and Conservation Division
Office of Protected Resources
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Re: Completion of tangle net training for Section 10(A)(1)(a) application 19621

Dear Ms. Hapeman,

I am pleased to report that myself and two co-investigators (Mr. Jeff Schwenter, Ms. Susan Michelle Pate) received instruction from regional experts in deployment and retrieval of tangle nets from small research vessels as well as safe removal of sea turtles and other marine animals from these nets.

On 14 August and 18 August, we spent a total of seven hours apiece with researchers from the University of Central Florida, half of which was associated with actively checking a deployed tangle net (length ~450 m) in the Indian River Lagoon at an area that has been monitored by this group since 1982. During this time, 13 sea turtles were captured (we assisted with most net removals) as well as roughly a dozen rays.

Between 15 and 17 August, we each spent 25 hours with personnel from the In-Water Research Group (IRG) at the St. Lucie Power Plant, where shorter (length ~75m) tangle nets were fished near the water surface to capture sea turtles entrained in the intake canal. Because of the unique configuration of this study site, we each deployed and retrieved the tangle nets about a dozen times to ensure familiarity with this process. While receiving training from the IRG researchers, we safely removed eight sea turtles from the nets.

The five days that we spent working with both research groups allowed us to compare and contrast subtle differences between them, and we spent a substantial amount of time discussing logistical considerations for our proposed study area with these researchers. We look forward to continued collaborations with these researchers, and plan to enlist their assistance with our tangle net surveys should we be permitted to initiate them as early as summer 2016.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael D. Arendt".

Michael D. Arendt
Principal Investigator